



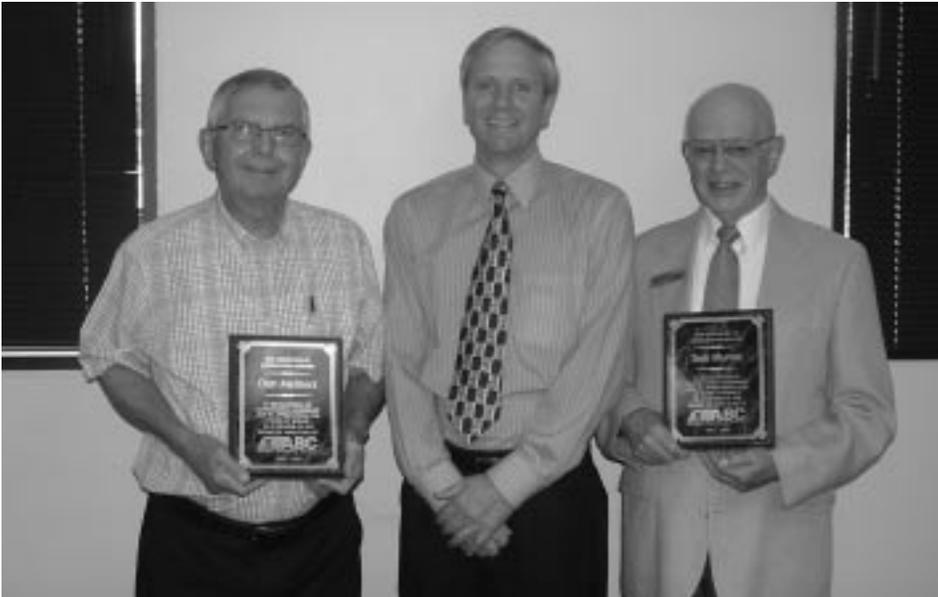
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Newsletter of Ability Building Center

July 2005

ABC

ABC Board bids farewell, but not goodbye...and welcomes



Don Meiners, Bruce Remme and Tom Murray

On May 24, 2005 at Ability Building Center's annual meeting, the board bid farewell to Tom Murray and Don Meiners. Together Tom and Don served a total of 31 years.



Steve Kann

The same day the board welcomed Steve Kann.

When asked to summarize his experience with ABC, Tom Murray said, "Time really flies when you're having fun and I've had fun working on ABC's board for more years than I can accurately count."

"My first thoughts are about the wonderful people I served with.

Board news continued on page 2

Published for the friends of Ability Building Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities and other special needs in Southeastern MN by providing rehabilitation and employment services.

Ability Building Center
1911 NW 14th Street
Rochester, MN 55901
507-281-6262

ABC Vocational Development Services
604 11th Ave. NW
Rochester, MN 55901
507-529-4812

ABC Works
730 North Pine
Caledonia, MN 55921
507-725-2057

ABC Works
62 North 3rd Street
LaCrescent, MN 55947
507- 895-7161

Woodland Industries
521 Old Highway Drive
Caledonia, MN 55921
507-725-2092

Executive Director: Steve Hill
Editor: Laurie Kellagher
Assistant Editor: Jane Kreidermacher
Contributing Writers: Joel Bigelow, Steve Ehlke, Steve Fuchs, Steve Hill, Steve Kann, Jane Kreidermacher, Neva Stavlund, Kathi Mitchell, Tammy Radloff, Jodi Liebenow, Tom Murray, Becky Vagt, Don Meiners



Board news continued...

From its earlier days, ABC recruited board candidates for the skills and experiences they could bring to the meetings. We have sought out folks that know about work and express this in their actions. I've always marveled at their sincerity and efforts to learn. ABC enjoys a reputation for its tradition of broadly based boards of individuals who always put the mission of ABC ahead of any personal goals or bias." "My retirement makes an opening for new blood and ideas, something absolutely vital for all businesses and especially for an enterprise like ours." "Dr. Mayo once said, There's no fun like work you enjoy and he was absolutely right."

Don Meiners says, "I was happy to have been on the board during the transition period four years ago when ABC became a provider of DT and H services in Houston County. ABC has continued to provide excellent service to the Houston County area. It was great to meet and work with the ABC board and staff in Rochester; I have certainly enjoyed these four years."

When asked to summarize his thoughts on his appointment to the board, Steve responded, "I am thrilled to be a new member on the Board for ABC. I have been connected to ABC for the past 13 years in one manner or another. My wife Brenda worked as an ABC Supervisor at IBM and through her I was able to get to know several of the participants. I have maintained close friendships with them throughout the past years. I see the true value of the jobs ABC provides within our community for the disabled. One of my own children, Maria, has Down Syndrome, and it is wonderful to know that opportunities exist in our community for her to have a fulfilling life and an opportunity to work."



From the Desk of the Executive Director, Steve Hill

I've been informed that there are so many things to report in this edition of the newsletter that I have to limit my comments to half a page or less. First, I want to thank our outgoing board members, Tom Murray and Don Meiners. These two individuals have provided ABC with dedicated leadership and support for many years. They both have held officer positions on the board and have served on several leadership committees and teams. They will be missed as board members.

Steve Kann, began as a new board member in May. We welcome Steve and look forward to working with him. Steve has been very active in the community with ARC and the United Way. He is employed at IBM. His background, experience and enthusiasm will be great assets for ABC's leadership.

Our annual golf tournament was held on June 29th. We had over 160 golfers registered to participate in this year's tournament. Storms and rain threatened all afternoon, but we only had to endure a half hour delay as some lightning and thunder passed over. The tournament was a great success again! Everyone had a great time and the unofficial numbers tell us that we made over \$10,000 more than we did at last year's tournament. I want to thank our Golf Tournament Team for organizing and putting together another great tournament. In particular I want to thank Larry Erickson, our Assistant Director who served as Chairperson of the Tournament Team and Laurie Kellagher, ABC's Development Director. Both of these individuals put in many hours of hard work to organize this event.

Finally, I'd like to let you know about an important upcoming event. In August, Woodland Industries, an ABC program in Houston County, will celebrate 25 years of operation in Houston County. We are planning a celebration on August 23rd, so stay tuned for details and plan on enjoying this event with us.

That's all for now!

Successful Fourth Annual Golf Tournament

On June 29th, the four person best shot tournament of (160) golfers was greeted with wind, clouds and a threat of storms. Despite a couple of small showers and a rain delay, the tournament was a great success.

Excerpts from Joel Bigelow, of Bigelow Enterprises our major sponsor of "On the Tee" with ABC for the last three years. –

"I would like to say a few words about why Bigelow Enterprises is the major sponsor of the ABC golf tournament. I should say proud sponsor. I feel ABC is a wonderful place where people with disabilities come to work, get training to work a normal job and most of all feel good about themselves being a normal taxpayer like the rest of us and take home a paycheck to support themselves. ABC provides encouragement and skills to those with disabilities so they are able to achieve their highest level. I feel blessed to be able to be the major sponsor of this golf tournament. This is a great golf tournament put on for a great cause.

The entire tournament, which included golf, silent auction and dinner raised over \$40,000 with all proceeds supporting ABC programs and services.

The staff and participants would like to thank all of the tournament's major, corporate, media, tee, and cart sponsors, those who donated to the silent auction, as well as the Kasson-Mantorville Boys and Girls Golf teams for their support in making this year's tournament a success.

Hole Contest Winners:

Hole #2	Longest Drive - Men	Corey Campbell
	Longest Drive - Women	Sue Kiely
Hole #6	Closest to Pin - Men	Greg Lussum
	Closest to Pin - Women	Deb Haggerty
Hole #8	Longest Putt - Men	Landon Koss
	Longest Putt - Women	Jess Schaffer

Silent Auction Items Available:

One Month Family Y Membership	value \$207
Amana Microwave	value \$150
(5) Cal Ripken Commemorative Steins	value \$250
Maple Tree (delivered and planted)	value \$100

If interested in any of these items, please call Laurie at 507-535-7105.



First Place Team Photo (Pat McNeilus, Keith Schandorff, Jay Nelson, Landon Koss)



Second Place Team Photo (Rick Lovett, Mike Kiely, Craig Kellagher, Kim Enerson)



Third Place Team Photo (Chuck Mahlman, Larry Erickson, Rick Cardiff, not pictured Gene Kreinbring)

*See you at Willow Creek
June 28, 2006*





Summer at Woodland

Summer offers several community opportunities for Woodland workers. New this year is the concession stand at the Caledonia pool. Racheal Gormly is pictured with some of the "goodies" which keep the kids in Caledonia energized while frozen delights such as drumsticks, popsicles, and ice cream bars are a cool treat on hot summer days.



Tim Brunson, part of the lawn mowing crew under the guidance of Vince Carolan along with several other participants, helps to keep the grounds at Woodland and ABC Works trimmed and looking neat. Another summer enclave began working at Camp Winnebago on June 14th.



Let it Shine

Woodland floors received a makeover on May 20th and 21st headed by Lori Twite, supervisor, pictured applying wax. Vince Carolan, job coach, is running what Barb refers to as the "water sucker upper!" Woodland's floor crew, supervised by Woodland manager Mac McCabe, have completed major projects this year at ABC Works LaCrescent, ABC Works Caledonia, Shapes, and the Caledonia Mini Mall.

Annually the crew cleans the floors at the Ag Center on Veteran's Day. Woodland's floor crew provides opportunities for community employment for several participants as well as leaving a bright shine wherever they have been!



“Growing Together” – Houston County Update

The “Growing Together” capital campaign continues to generate money for the new building expansion at ABC Works in LaCrescent. To date we have raised \$280,393.51, with \$244,467.02 left to pay on our mortgage. Thanks to everyone for their generous and caring donations! Any donations of \$250.00 or greater are recognized on our display board in the building entrance. The additional space in LaCrescent has enhanced work opportunities for the participants served and several participants can now work in their home community of LaCrescent rather than traveling to the ABC Works site in Caledonia! Please stop by any time to tour the new space or just to say hi!

Woodland's Outstanding Worker

Dave Wiste received the second quarter WOW (Woodland Outstanding Worker) award at a special break period on April 6, 2005. Pictured with Mac McCabe, Woodland manager, Dave is accepting a crisp new ten dollar bill and holding his award poster which will hang on the wall of the break room. Dave was cited for his positive attitude, excellent attendance, flexibility, and willingness to try new tasks. Dave is also known as "substitute extraordinaire" for his reliability and dependability filling in at a moment's notice for several community enclaves. Dave has progressed from working a few hours two days a week to almost full time hours. Shortly after the time of the award Dave accepted a permanent position as part of the enclave at UW-LaCrosse. He currently divides his time between Quillin's, Woodland Industries, and Merchant's Bank in Caledonia and anticipates returning to the UW-LaCrosse enclave in the fall.



Woodland Industries is celebrating 25 years of providing quality services and programs to persons with disabilities. You are invited to celebrate with them at an open house on August 23rd from 1:00pm – 6:00pm at 521 Old Highway Drive, Caledonia.

Lowry Award Winners

The Lowry Award is given bi-monthly to recognize workers in ABC's Extended Employment programs for their outstanding progress towards goals and improvement in overall work performance.

Winners of the Lowry Award are then eligible for the annual Employee of the Year Award.



The Lowry Award winner for March/April was Derek Jackson. Ability Enterprises job coach says, "Derek has been great to ask staff for extra work or finding work to do. He has been very courteous to others and has been willing to help out co-workers ."

Congratulations Derek on this accomplishment!

The Lowry Award winner for May/June was Gerald Healey. Supported Employment work supervisor for the IBM Dishware crew, Bev Farlow, said, "Gerald is a nice fellow that is a hard worker. He is cooperative and is willing to take on any task that is given to him. Gerald always reports to work early and rarely takes time off. He is friendly, polite and well liked by his co-workers and the staff of Euresst Dining Services."

Congratulations Gerald on this accomplishment!





Spotlight on Success

Dwight Moldenhauer, long time St. Charles resident, was this year's recipient of the **Outstanding Rehabilitation Participant Award from the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP)**. Dwight was evaluated on the following criteria for this award: "For the consumer and/or participant in rehabilitation activities who best utilizes resources and services and overcomes barriers to achieve positive outcomes and return to his/her highest level of productivity and independence."



Pictured from left to right are: Tammy Radloff, Dwight Moldenhauer, Renee Kreter and Jodi Liebenow

In October 2004, Dwight received the **Employee of the Year Award from the Minnesota Association of Rehabilitation Providers**. Renee Kreter, his rehabilitation counselor from Stubbe & Associates, Inc., nominated Dwight for these awards. Tammy Radloff and Jodi Liebenow of Ability Building Center, his medical team and his new employer John Steffel of St. Charles Lawn and Landscape also generated letters of support for the nominations. Dwight was nominated due to his ability to overcome significant physical challenges and accomplishing outstanding vocational outcomes following very serious injuries he sustained as a result of an accident in June 2002.

Dwight's injuries included extensive head and facial trauma. These injuries resulted in a traumatic brain injury as well as impairments to his vision, hearing, speech and ambulation. Dwight's capacities to swallow and breathe were just a few of

the initial barriers he faced in his recovery. Dwight endured a number of surgeries and set backs, including infections and the possibility of blindness.

Through a comprehensive rehabilitation program, involving the Mayo Clinic (including the Outpatient Brain Injury Program), Olmsted Medical Center, Whitewater HealthCare Center, Stubbe & Associates, Grinnell Mutual, Ability Building Center and most of all, Dwight, he has maintained a sense of humor and

a positive focus and has made unimagined progress in his recovery and accomplished much more than his physicians medically predicted. He not only regained his ability to be independent, but obtained part-time employment as a small engine repair technician at St. Charles Lawn and Landscape.

Dwight is very appreciative of the opportunity John Steffel, owner of St. Charles Lawn and Landscape, has provided him and John's willingness to accommodate his limitations and most importantly recognize his abilities. In turn, Mr. Steffel feels he has gained an incredibly valuable employee who contributes positively to all aspects of his business.

It was with great pride and admiration that Renee Kreter, Tammy Radloff and Jodi Liebenow had the honor of joining Dwight in Orlando, Florida, on April 16, 2005, as he received this well deserved award.

Congratulations on these awards!!

Abilities Unlimited Education

Abilities Unlimited staff and participants are very passionate about educating others on brain injury prevention. This is evident in the number of community awareness activities members of our program have been active in during the past few months.

The winter of 2004 marked the second year that staff and participants were invited into the Rochester public schools 8th grade health classes to speak on alcohol and drug use and the effects on the brain. This has been a great opportunity for three participants to share their stories, make a difference and be involved in their communities, not to mention the students seem to really look forward to our visits. This year we expanded to presenting to several greater Rochester schools as well, estimating that we connected with over 1,000 students.

In March, Brain Injury Awareness Month, Vocational Case Manager, Bill Markus, and AU's Program Manager, Neva

Stavlund, and Jennifer Mosher, a participant of AU, all active members of the Brain Injury Community Committee, worked with the committee to put on a skate board expo at the Boys and Girls Club. Skateboarders from Board to Death did demos, and there were five empathy experience stations that promoted brain injury awareness. In keeping with the theme, the Brain Injury Community Committee also handed out bicycle helmets.

On June 1st, Becky Vagt, ILS Program Coordinator, completed the training required to receive her CBIT (Certified Brain Injury Trainer) certification from AACBIS (American Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialist), a branch of the Brain Injury Association of America. Becky is now prepared to train and support others in receiving their Brain Injury Specialist Certification. Having staff acquire this level of certification confirms Abilities Unlimited commitment to providing the best quality services to our participants.

Memorials and Tributes

ABC is honored to have received gifts from family, friends and loved ones in memory of those who have died and in tribute to others who live on. The following gifts were received through May 31, 2005.

Donor

Anonymous
Wallace Bigelow
Steve and Sharon Boyce
Pete and Margaret Coleman
Duane and Linda Covey
Elizabeth Cousins
Dick and Nancy Engrav
Dorothy Hartman
Steve & Karin Hill
Ruth Horihan
Edwin and Marijan Irlbeck
Rita Ann Lawrance

In Memory of:

Shirley Betz
Glen Ebenhoh
Johnny Gillespie
Heather Kraetsch
Mary Lorenz
Dennis Zortman
Diana Simmons
Glen Hartman
Walter Hill
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Gene Schmidt
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In Memory of:

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Mary McGinnis
Charlie Horihan
Kaleb Hitchins
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Marijo Prigge
Wilmer Rietmann
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Steve Anderson
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Donor

Helmut and Heide Buettner
Peter & Margaret Coleman
Grace Franz
Gene and Aryls Schmidt

In Honor of

Tom Siggelkow
Elizabeth Coleman
Fred Ableitner
Vicki Schmidt

In Memory

Heather Kraetsch



Ability Building Center along with parents and friends said goodbye to Heather Kreatsch on May 18, 2005. Heather was employed as a job coach from October 18, 2004 until May 17, 2005. Heather died from injuries she sustained in a car accident on May 17, 2005. Heather was initially employed as a job coach for the Ability Enterprises evening custodial crew at Resurrection Church and more recently she worked in the Options to Work program.

“My Dearest Heather”, was written by a fellow Ability Enterprises job coach in Heather’s memory. It was read at Heather’s funeral and went with her to her final resting place.

My Dearest Heather

You are the laughter and happiness in all our hearts.

A smile so bright you can light up a room

An unforgettable laugh all included with an occasional snort

Group hugs with an “I love you”

A quick joke to make someone laugh

A promise to share something you have plenty of (you know what I mean)

To share what you have to make others feel special

To share such a wonderful spirit if even for just a short time

Heather what we’ll cherish most is:

The laughter

The smiles

The funky poses for cameras

The blonde moments

The wheelchair races

The memories

It’s not goodbye or farewell

It’s I’ll see you someday soon

May God take care of you

And your spirit remain in our hearts

Until we finally meet again for one more group hug.

Your dear friend – Beth

Heather’s presence will be missed greatly by staff and participants, but the memories will be with us daily. If you are in the building, stop by Ability Enterprises to see Heather’s Memorial.



Transportation Needs



On a daily basis ABC transports an average of 300 passengers to work and around the community.

Ability Building Center is currently in need of a four passenger wheelchair accessible van.

Please help us continue to provide quality transportation to individuals with disabilities.

Please use the enclosed envelope for your donation or call Laurie Kellagher at 507-535-7105.



All in a Days Work!!

On June 24th, 12 representatives from ABC participated in this year's Rochesterfest Grand Parade.

This year's float entry, "Take off with Ability Enterprises," highlighted the many jobs that our work crews perform on community worksites.

Riding on the float are participants from Ability Enterprises.



Ability Building Center
1911 NW 14th Street
PO Box 6938
Rochester, Minnesota 55903-6938
lauriek@abcinc.org

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